

Media Promotes Ideological Mental Masturbation

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In the contemporary media landscape, the phenomenon of "ideological mental masturbation" has emerged as a critical challenge to public discourse and intellectual engagement. This paper explores how modern media platforms, particularly those driven by algorithms, cater to and reinforce pre-existing beliefs, often at the expense of broader knowledge and understanding. The term refers to the indulgence in consuming media content that confirms one's own beliefs without challenging the intellect or contributing to productive dialogue. Such practices not only fortify ideological echo chambers but also diminish the capacity for critical thinking among audiences. This exploration delves into the psychological underpinnings of why individuals gravitate toward media that echoes their ideological stances, thereby engaging in a self-gratifying yet intellectually sterile process. By unpacking the role of cognitive biases like confirmation bias and the backfire effect, and examining the impact of social media algorithms, this paper aims to illuminate the mechanisms that entrench this phenomenon. The goal is to underscore the importance of media literacy and diversified media consumption in combating the pervasive influence of ideological mental masturbation in shaping public opinion and societal values.

Keywords: ideological mental masturbation, media consumption, cognitive biases, confirmation bias, backfire effect, social media algorithms, echo chambers, public discourse, media literacy, intellectual engagement.

Introduction

In contemporary discourse, the term "ideological mental masturbation" is increasingly relevant, encapsulating the phenomenon where individuals indulge in media content that reinforces their existing beliefs without substantively challenging their intellect or fostering productive dialogue. This practice is akin to intellectual self-gratification—it feels satisfying yet ultimately contributes little to cognitive development or problem-solving. This paper aims to dissect the psychological underpinnings of why and how consumers of media content gravitate toward this self-affirming cycle.

The exploration of "ideological mental masturbation" involves understanding the cognitive biases and psychological comforts that drive individuals to seek out and consume media that echoes their worldview, often to the exclusion of opposing perspectives. Such behavior not only fortifies pre-existing beliefs but also insulates the individual from the cognitive dissonance that typically accompanies conflicting information. By delving into these psychological mechanisms, this paper seeks to elucidate how media consumption can become a closed loop of reaffirmation, impeding the consumer's ability to engage in critical thinking and meaningful discourse.

This inquiry is crucial for grasping the broader social implications, as the echo chambers formed by such media consumption patterns can amplify societal divisions and hinder collective problem-solving. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing strategies to promote media literacy and encourage a more intellectually diverse media diet among consumers. Thus, this paper will explore both the allure and the potential intellectual hazards of this phenomenon, aiming to offer insights that could mitigate its more divisive effects.

Psychological Appeal of Ideological Media

Basic Psychological Needs for Certainty and Control

The human psyche inherently craves certainty and control as fundamental components of emotional and psychological stability. In an unpredictable world, these needs are often met through the consumption of media that aligns closely with one's pre-existing beliefs and values. Ideological media provides a predictable and reassuring environment, reducing the psychological discomfort associated with uncertainty and the cognitive load required to process new or conflicting information.

This drive for certainty is deeply rooted in the need to maintain a coherent and consistent sense of self and worldview. Ideologically congruent media reinforces this self-concept by affirming the validity of one's beliefs and providing a clear framework within which the world is understandable and less threatening. The control aspect comes into play when individuals select media sources that mirror their perspective, effectively giving them control over the information environment they inhabit. This selective engagement allows individuals to shape their perception of reality in ways that feel manageable and secure.

Satisfaction of Emotional Needs Over Informational or Intellectual Needs

While media ideally serves to inform and educate, ideological media consumption often prioritizes emotional satisfaction over informational content or intellectual rigor. This type of media consumption caters more to emotional needs by providing comfort, validation, and a sense of belonging to a community with shared values. It plays into the basic human desire for social connection and recognition, reinforcing group identity and solidarity through shared narratives and common foes.

The emotional gratification derived from ideological media is akin to the reinforcement one might receive from a supportive social group; it bolsters self-esteem and reassures the individual of their place within a larger

community that shares similar views. This can be particularly appealing in a highly polarized society where being part of a clearly defined group provides a sense of security and purpose.

Moreover, the consumption of ideologically aligned media often involves less cognitive effort than engaging with media that challenges one's views. It avoids the mental strain involved in critically analyzing contrary opinions or synthesizing complex, nuanced information. This ease of cognitive processing makes ideological media particularly appealing, as it aligns with the brain's natural preference for efficiency and minimal cognitive strain, thereby providing a path of least resistance to emotional and cognitive comfort.

In summary, the psychological appeal of ideological media is multifaceted, rooted in the basic human needs for certainty, control, emotional comfort, and social belonging. By fulfilling these needs, ideological media secures a powerful influence on its audience, promoting a cycle of consumption that prioritizes emotional rewards over informational or intellectual fulfillment. This dynamic highlights the importance of understanding and addressing the psychological factors at play in media consumption to foster a more informed and intellectually engaged public.

Cognitive Biases and Media Consumption

Confirmation Bias

Confirmation bias is a fundamental psychological tendency where individuals favor information that confirms their pre-existing beliefs and disregard data that contradicts them. This bias influences media consumption patterns significantly. When individuals encounter information that supports their worldview, it not only reinforces their current beliefs but also enhances their confidence in those beliefs. This tendency makes confirmation bias one of the most powerful drivers of media consumption,

as it directs individuals to continually seek out and consume media that affirms their views.

The role of confirmation bias in media consumption is particularly evident in how individuals select news sources or follow particular commentators who share their ideological leanings. This selective consumption ensures that their informational environment remains homogeneous and supportive of their beliefs, effectively insulating them from alternative perspectives.

The Backfire Effect

Closely related to confirmation bias, the backfire effect occurs when individuals are presented with evidence that contradicts their beliefs but respond by strengthening their original views. This counterintuitive reaction can intensify ideological entrenchment, making it even harder to sway opinions with factual information. The backfire effect is particularly potent in highly charged political or ideological contexts where individuals' identities and core values feel threatened by opposing viewpoints.

In the realm of media, the backfire effect can lead to a polarization where contradictory information does not open debate but rather closes it, pushing individuals to retreat further into their ideological shells. Media that challenges one's views not only fails to persuade but may actually reinforce viewers' original beliefs by triggering a defensive psychological stance.

Selective Exposure Theory

Selective exposure theory explains individuals' tendencies to preferentially seek information that aligns with their existing attitudes, thereby avoiding information that does not conform to their expectations or beliefs. This theory underscores the role of personal choice in media consumption, suggesting that individuals actively create echo chambers by selecting sources and communities that share their ideological orientations.

This bias makes consumers particularly susceptible to engaging with media that caters directly to their preferences, both confirming their beliefs and providing a comfortable, reaffirming informational environment. This selective exposure contributes to the fragmentation of the media landscape, where diverse media outlets cater to narrow segments of the population, reinforcing and amplifying specific worldviews.

Conclusion on Cognitive Biases

These cognitive biases—confirmation bias, the backfire effect, and selective exposure theory—play crucial roles in shaping media consumption habits. They facilitate the creation of ideologically homogeneous information environments that support and reinforce pre-existing beliefs.

Understanding these biases is essential for media consumers aiming to break out of ideological echo chambers and for media producers and platforms that seek to foster a more informed, open, and dialogic public discourse. Addressing these biases in media consumption practices can help mitigate the effects of ideological entrenchment and promote a healthier, more diverse informational ecosystem.

The Role of Cognitive Dissonance in Media Choices

Understanding Cognitive Dissonance

Cognitive dissonance is a psychological phenomenon that occurs when an individual holds contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values, or when their behaviors are not in alignment with their beliefs. This state of dissonance creates psychological discomfort, leading individuals to seek ways to reduce or eliminate the inconsistency. In the context of media consumption, cognitive dissonance plays a critical role in influencing how individuals select and interact with information.

When confronted with information that contradicts their pre-existing beliefs, individuals experience discomfort. To alleviate this discomfort, they may either adjust their beliefs to accommodate the new information (which can be psychologically costly and challenging) or dismiss and avoid the contradictory information. More often than not, the latter is chosen because it is the path of least resistance, allowing individuals to maintain their current beliefs without the strain of reevaluation.

Media Outlets and Cognitive Dissonance

Media outlets, aware of the discomfort caused by cognitive dissonance, often design their content strategies to align with the beliefs and values of their target audience. This alignment not only attracts and retains viewership but also ensures that the audience continues to engage with the media outlet's content comfortably and without psychological resistance.

For example, a news channel known for its conservative leanings will produce and broadcast stories that reinforce conservative values and viewpoints. This content strategy not only solidifies the channel's base audience but also ensures that the audience members continue to feel validated in their beliefs. This validation is crucial for maintaining loyalty and regular engagement, as the audience is less likely to seek alternative news sources that might provoke cognitive dissonance.

Capitalizing on Cognitive Dissonance Reduction

Media outlets capitalize on the tendency to reduce cognitive dissonance by curating content that fits neatly within the ideological frameworks of their audiences. This can involve several strategies:

1. **Echo Chamber Creation:** By continuously presenting content that aligns with the audience's beliefs, media outlets effectively create echo chambers. These are safe spaces where viewers are shielded from opposing viewpoints, thereby minimizing opportunities for cognitive dissonance.

2. **Selective Storytelling:** Media outlets may choose to highlight certain aspects of a story or ignore other aspects altogether, shaping the narrative in a way that conforms to the biases of their audience. This selective storytelling helps maintain a consistent, cohesive narrative that does not challenge the viewer's worldview.
3. **Reinforcement Cycles:** Through repetitive messaging and consistent ideological content, media outlets can strengthen certain beliefs and attitudes among their viewers. This reinforcement makes it even less likely that the audience will accept contrary information in the future, as their beliefs become more ingrained.

Conclusion

The interplay between cognitive dissonance and media choices is a powerful dynamic that shapes public discourse and personal beliefs. Media outlets, by creating content that aligns with and reinforces their audience's pre-existing beliefs, ensure viewer loyalty and engagement but at the cost of a well-informed, critically thinking public. Breaking this cycle involves promoting media literacy, encouraging exposure to diverse viewpoints, and cultivating an openness to reconsider and possibly revise one's beliefs. This not only helps individuals manage cognitive dissonance more adaptively but also fosters a more informed and resilient society.

Echo Chambers and Social Media Algorithms

Formation of Echo Chambers by Social Media Algorithms

Social media algorithms play a pivotal role in shaping users' online experiences, significantly influencing the formation of echo chambers. These algorithms are designed to enhance user engagement by curating content that aligns with individual preferences, based on previous interactions such as likes, shares, comments, and the amount of time spent on certain posts. This personalized content curation ensures that users

frequently encounter information that reinforces their existing beliefs and attitudes.

The mechanism behind this involves complex data analytics that track user behavior across various posts and interactions. By continuously adjusting to user preferences, these algorithms create a feedback loop, where the content that resonates with a user's views is more likely to be shown. This not only increases the time users spend on the platform but also subtly narrows the diversity of information they are exposed to, effectively isolating them in ideologically homogeneous environments, or echo chambers.

Psychological Comfort in Echo Chambers

Echo chambers provide significant psychological comfort, which is a key reason users may prefer these environments. Within these chambers, users encounter affirmation and agreement, which reinforces their sense of identity and belonging to a group with shared values and beliefs. This reinforcement is psychologically satisfying; it validates personal worldviews and reduces the cognitive dissonance that might arise from encountering opposing viewpoints.

The comfort provided by echo chambers is underpinned by several psychological phenomena:

- **Social validation:** Agreement within the group confirms the correctness of one's beliefs, enhancing self-esteem and the sense of social belonging.
- **Reduction of cognitive load:** Processing information that aligns with pre-existing beliefs requires less cognitive effort than reconciling conflicting information, making the consumption of consistent information feel easier and more enjoyable.
- **Fear of isolation:** Confronting or accepting opposing views can sometimes threaten social ties within one's group, leading to

potential social isolation. Echo chambers mitigate this fear by surrounding individuals with like-minded peers.

Difficulty in Breaking Echo Chamber Cycles

Breaking out of echo chambers is challenging due to both the design of social media algorithms and the psychological comfort they afford. The algorithms are optimized to maximize user engagement, which often means reinforcing the echo chamber effect. Altering these algorithms to promote more diverse viewpoints risks reducing user engagement, which social media platforms are generally hesitant to do.

From a psychological perspective, stepping outside of an echo chamber can be unsettling. It challenges deeply held beliefs and requires significant cognitive effort to navigate complex and conflicting information. Moreover, there is a social risk involved; changing one's views might alienate friends or family members who share the original beliefs.

To effectively break these cycles, several strategies can be employed:

- **Promotion of media literacy:** Educating users about how algorithms shape their content feeds and the importance of encountering diverse viewpoints.
- **Algorithmic adjustments:** Encouraging social media platforms to modify algorithms to intersperse diverse content that challenges users' perspectives, not just content that aligns with them.
- **Facilitation of dialogue:** Creating spaces and opportunities for constructive dialogue between differing groups to promote understanding and reduce ideological polarization.

In conclusion, while social media algorithms efficiently serve personalized content, their role in forming echo chambers is substantial, providing psychological comfort but at the cost of exposure to diverse viewpoints. Addressing this issue is crucial for fostering a more informed and open society.

Impact of Ideological Media on Critical Thinking

Impairment of Critical Thinking Skills

Continuous exposure to ideologically aligned media significantly impacts an individual's critical thinking skills. By predominantly engaging with media that reinforces existing beliefs, individuals may develop a narrowed perception of the world that impedes their ability to objectively analyze issues. This scenario often leads to a confirmation bias loop, where only information that supports pre-existing views is acknowledged and absorbed, while conflicting information is dismissed or overlooked.

This narrowing of perspective restricts the cognitive processes involved in critical thinking, such as:

- **Questioning Assumptions:** Regularly engaging with like-minded content diminishes the practice of questioning one's assumptions, which is crucial for a well-rounded critical thinking process.
- **Evaluating Evidence:** Individuals may become less adept at evaluating the credibility and relevance of evidence, especially if it contradicts their established beliefs.
- **Recognizing Biases:** Continuous exposure to ideologically consistent media makes it challenging for individuals to recognize biases, both in the media they consume and in their own thinking.

Degradation in Processing Conflicting Information

When individuals are not regularly exposed to conflicting viewpoints, their ability to engage with and process such information can atrophy. This degradation presents significant challenges in a world where complex problems often require the integration of diverse perspectives and solutions. The reduced capacity to consider or integrate conflicting information can lead to:

- **Increased Cognitive Dissonance:** Encountering opposing views might cause greater psychological discomfort and stress, leading individuals to retreat further into familiar ideological territories.
- **Polarization:** As individuals become less capable of processing opposing viewpoints, societal divisions may deepen, leading to increased polarization.

Broader Implications for Problem-Solving and Creativity

The impact of ideologically aligned media on critical thinking extends into broader areas of problem-solving and creativity:

- **Problem-Solving:** Effective problem-solving typically requires a holistic understanding of issues, considering various factors and potential consequences. A lack of critical thinking skills can result in oversimplified solutions that fail to address complex realities, potentially exacerbating the problems.
- **Creativity:** Creativity thrives on the ability to make connections between seemingly unrelated ideas and to think outside conventional boundaries. A reduced exposure to diverse perspectives and a weakened critical thinking ability can stifle creative thought, limiting innovation.
- **Adaptability:** In a rapidly changing world, adaptability is crucial. The ability to quickly assimilate and react to new information underpins both personal and organizational success. Impaired critical thinking compromises this adaptability, making it harder for individuals and societies to respond effectively to new challenges.

Conclusion

The implications of continuous exposure to ideologically aligned media are profound and wide-reaching. It not only impairs an individual's critical thinking abilities but also affects broader societal capacities for problem-solving and innovation. To counteract these effects, it is essential to foster environments that encourage the consumption of a diverse range of media

and promote engagement with differing viewpoints. Encouraging critical media literacy and creating platforms for open dialogue can help mitigate the adverse effects and support a more thoughtful, creative, and adaptable society.

Media Literacy and Psychological Resilience

Importance of Media Literacy

Media literacy is an essential skill in today's information-rich society. It enables individuals to critically analyze the messages they receive from various media sources, understand the purposes of those messages, and recognize the techniques used to influence audiences. This skill is particularly crucial in identifying and understanding ideological biases in media, which can subtly or overtly color the information presented.

The ability to discern bias helps viewers navigate the vast landscapes of information with an informed and critical eye. It allows individuals to question the credibility of the sources and the integrity of the content, rather than passively absorbing information as truth. This critical approach is vital in a media environment where content often comes loaded with an agenda that seeks to shape viewer perception and opinion.

Media Literacy as a Tool for Recognizing Ideological Bias

Media literacy educates individuals on how media content is crafted and shaped by various influences, including political, economic, and cultural forces. By understanding these dynamics, individuals can better assess the motivations behind the content they consume. For instance, recognizing that a news outlet consistently frames stories in a way that supports a particular political stance can alert viewers to the presence of ideological bias. This awareness helps consumers maintain a critical distance from the

content, enabling them to analyze and interpret information more independently.

Media Literacy Promoting Psychological Resilience

Psychological resilience refers to the ability to cope with and adapt to stress and adversity. Media literacy enhances this resilience by empowering individuals to confront and counteract the bombardment of biased media messages. This empowerment comes from understanding that media can manipulate emotions and perceptions and from having the skills to unpack these manipulations.

Here are ways in which media literacy can promote psychological resilience against ideological mental masturbation:

1. **Enhanced Critical Thinking:** Media literacy fosters critical thinking, which is crucial for questioning and challenging the status quo presented by media outlets. This ability to think critically prevents individuals from falling into echo chambers and promotes a more nuanced understanding of complex issues.
2. **Reduced Susceptibility to Manipulation:** With media literacy, individuals are less likely to be manipulated by sensationalist or skewed reporting. They can identify emotional appeals and logical fallacies in arguments, which are often used to sway public opinion unduly.
3. **Diverse Media Consumption:** Media literacy encourages exploration and consumption of a wide range of media sources, including those outside one's comfort zone. This habit not only broadens one's perspective but also reduces the impact of any single media's ideological influence.
4. **Stress Reduction:** By reducing the impact of sensational and biased media, media literacy can help lower the stress associated with media consumption. Understanding that certain content is designed to provoke emotional reactions can help individuals detach and maintain a calmer, more objective viewpoint.

5. **Community Engagement and Dialogue:** Media literate individuals are more likely to engage in community discussions and debates with an informed perspective. This engagement is crucial for breaking down ideological barriers and fostering a more inclusive and understanding community dialogue.

Conclusion

In conclusion, media literacy is not just about decoding messages or understanding media functions; it's about building a foundation for psychological resilience in the face of pervasive media influence. By cultivating these skills, individuals can protect themselves from ideological manipulation and contribute to a more informed, resilient, and democratic society. This resilience is essential for maintaining personal well-being and promoting healthy societal discourse in an increasingly complex media landscape.

Strategies for Broadening Media Consumption

Psychological Strategies for Diversifying Media Diets

To counteract the narrowing influence of ideological media, individuals can adopt psychological strategies that encourage openness and curiosity. These strategies help in broadening media consumption habits and include methods borrowed from therapeutic practices such as exposure therapy, cognitive flexibility training, and mindfulness techniques.

1. **Exposure Therapy Principles:** Originally used to treat phobias and anxiety disorders, exposure therapy involves gradual and controlled exposure to the source of fear. In the context of media consumption, this could mean intentionally engaging with media sources outside of one's ideological comfort zone. Starting with more neutral topics can help ease the discomfort that may come with contrasting viewpoints,

gradually building up to more contentious subjects as tolerance increases.

2. **Cognitive Flexibility Training:** This involves exercises designed to enhance the mental ability to switch between thinking about two different concepts and to think about multiple concepts simultaneously. For media consumers, this might involve activities such as comparing and contrasting articles on the same topic from different sources or discussing diverse opinions in study groups or forums. Enhancing cognitive flexibility helps individuals hold and evaluate multiple viewpoints, fostering a more balanced understanding of issues.
3. **Mindfulness in Media Consumption:** Mindfulness involves being fully present and engaged in the current moment, which can be applied to media consumption by being actively aware and critical of the content being consumed. This means questioning the source, the intention behind the content, and the emotional responses it elicits. Mindfulness helps prevent automatic and passive consumption of media, encouraging a more deliberate and thoughtful approach.

Benefits of Engaging with a Diverse Range of Media Sources

Diversifying one's media diet has significant cognitive and social benefits that contribute to a well-rounded individual and, by extension, a healthy democratic society.

1. **Enhanced Critical Thinking Skills:** Exposure to a variety of media sources and viewpoints can sharpen critical thinking skills, as it forces the brain to reconcile conflicting information and to consider multiple perspectives. This not only deepens one's understanding but also bolsters the ability to engage in nuanced thinking and reasoning.
2. **Reduced Echo Chamber Effect:** Broadening media consumption can help break down the silos of echo chambers that reinforce one's pre-existing beliefs. This exposure to diverse perspectives fosters greater empathy and understanding across ideological divides, potentially reducing societal polarization.

3. **Greater Cultural and Social Awareness:** Engaging with a wide range of media sources expands knowledge on various cultures, societies, and global issues. This increased awareness can enhance personal and professional interactions, especially in increasingly globalized environments.
4. **Boosted Creativity:** Exposure to diverse ideas and viewpoints can stimulate creativity by introducing new concepts and different ways of thinking. This can be particularly valuable in creative, academic, and professional fields where innovation is prized.
5. **Improved Decision-Making:** Individuals who consume a diverse array of media are likely to make better-informed decisions because they have considered multiple angles of a situation or problem. This comprehensive perspective is crucial in both personal decision-making and in roles that affect broader communities and organizations.

Conclusion

Adopting psychological strategies to diversify media consumption is essential for developing a well-informed, empathetic, and critical-thinking populace. Such strategies not only enhance individual cognitive capacities and social skills but also contribute to a more informed, cohesive, and tolerant society. As media continues to play a central role in shaping perceptions and opinions, broadening media diets is crucial for ensuring a balanced understanding of the complex world in which we live.

Conclusion

Recapitulation of Psychological Mechanisms

The phenomenon of ideological mental masturbation in media consumption is fundamentally underpinned by several psychological mechanisms that encourage passive conformity and comfort over critical

engagement and growth. Key among these are cognitive biases like confirmation bias, which predisposes individuals to favor information that reaffirms their existing beliefs, and the backfire effect, which sees individuals doubling down on their beliefs when confronted with contradictory evidence. Cognitive dissonance, another significant psychological factor, plays a role in individuals' tendency to shun information that conflicts with their pre-established views to avoid mental discomfort.

These mechanisms collectively contribute to the formation of echo chambers, particularly potent in the digital age of algorithm-driven content delivery on social media platforms. These platforms, designed to maximize engagement, often exacerbate the issue by filtering and recommending content that aligns with users' previous behaviors, thus reinforcing their existing beliefs and isolating them from divergent viewpoints.

The Role of Individual Awareness and Media Literacy

Combatting the ensnaring comfort of ideological echo chambers necessitates a conscious effort toward heightened individual awareness and enhanced media literacy. Media literacy is crucial as it equips individuals with the tools to critically analyze the source and intent behind the information presented, discern biases, and recognize the manipulative tactics often employed to shape public opinion. This form of literacy promotes a more questioning, skeptical approach to media consumption, encouraging individuals to evaluate the credibility and argumentation of the information they receive, regardless of the medium.

Call to Action

To counter the pervasive influence of ideological mental masturbation, a proactive, deliberate approach to media consumption is essential. Consumers must challenge themselves to step beyond the intellectual comfort provided by echo chambers by actively seeking and engaging with a diverse range of content. This includes:

- **Exploring Alternative Perspectives:** Making a concerted effort to access media outlets, authors, and platforms that offer differing viewpoints. This not only broadens one's perspective but also strengthens critical thinking by exposing one to a variety of argumentative styles and reasoning.
- **Engaging in Constructive Dialogue:** Participating in discussions with individuals who hold opposing views can be highly beneficial. Such interactions can help clarify one's thoughts, challenge preconceptions, and foster a greater understanding of the complex, multifaceted nature of most issues.
- **Promoting and Practicing Media Literacy:** Advocating for media literacy in educational curricula and community programs can raise collective awareness about the impact of media on our thoughts and behaviors. Individuals should also practice these skills regularly to maintain a healthy skepticism and a critically engaged mind.
- **Contributing to a Healthier Media Environment:** Supporting journalistic integrity and platforms that promote a balanced presentation of news can help create a healthier media landscape that values depth, accuracy, and diversity over sensationalism and divisiveness.

In conclusion, while the digital age presents unprecedented challenges to maintaining a well-informed public, it also offers unique opportunities for individual empowerment and enlightenment. By embracing these opportunities and committing to a diverse and challenging media diet, consumers can enhance their intellectual engagement and contribute to a richer, more productive societal discourse. This effort is essential not just for personal growth but for the health and vibrancy of democratic societies worldwide.

